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ABSTRACT

The development of professional education in librarianship is reviewed from the national pattern conforming to the general system in each country, through the unilateral (paternalistic) internationalism in librarianship due to colonialism and the emergence of a new professional nationalism, to the opportunities offered by the growth of such multilateral international bodies as UNESCO, COMLA, and IFLA. It is proposed that UNESCO/IFLA organize a scheme of international cooperation in education for librarianship in order to ensure wider utilization of resources. Teletuition, staff exchanges, and sharing of educational software are some methods suggested. (Author/JEG)

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RESOURCE SHARING IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR LIBRARIANSHIP: An international approach

by

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0. Abstract

Librarianship developed according to national patterns in Europe and North America, and professional education conformed to the established general systems in each country. Nationalism gave way to unilateral (paternalistic) internationalism in librarianship as a result of colonialism, though this developed a benevolent aid scheme. A new professional nationalism emerged, though still with heavy reliance on existing models.

The growth of multilateral international bodies such as UNESCO, COMLA and IFLA offer a new opportunity. A proposal is made for UNESCO/IFLA to organize a scheme of international co-operation in education for librarianship, in order to ensure wider utilisation of resources. Teletuition, staff exchanges, and sharing of educational software are some methods which should be used.

1. Introduction

1.1 The present paper is concerned with the possibilities for a new form of international co-operation, but one having its roots in two well-established features of our profession. The area under review is that of education and training for librarianship. The features used are: international resource-sharing, and teletuition.

1.2 It is my purpose to indicate the background problems faced in internationalising librarianship, both generally and in the developing countries, and review the solutions which have been applied in the past. I then propose to indicate some interesting developments in my own College (linking them with similar institutions in other countries), and make suggestions as to how these features may be developed and applied for the benefit of all library schools but particularly those of South East Asia.

2. Early Nationalism

2.1 Library education in Europe and North America has generally conformed to the established patterns of the various academic systems, and education for the professions has been grafted onto these. In central Europe, the traditional five-year first degrees pattern has been adopted for library education and professional associations have not been deeply involved. Professional education on the German model (which has spread to several neighbouring countries) is firmly wedded to the university system, and forms part of the integrated first degree.

2.2 In the U.S.A., library education very soon conformed to tne North American university pattern, whereby an academic four-year first degree (at Bachelor's level) is followed by a one- or two-year first professional degree at Master's level. After initial experiments in integrated courses, library science at Bachelor's level is not now favoured in North America. There is a balance of academic independence of university education, with accreditation by the American Library Association. Education for other professions also follows this pattern.

2.3 In Britain, a third form of education for librarianship has grown up, similar to that for other professions in the country. The nineteenth century saw the rise of trade unions and professional associations; one distinguishing feature of the latter was the concern with professional education and examinations. The Library Association of the U.K. organized examinations, whilst the Library Assistants' Association organized tuition. In 1946 this tuition was taken over by colleges of commerce, and twenty years later many of these became polytechnics and now offer three-year bachelor's degrees in several vocational areas. These will consist of integrated professional and academic subjects considered to be particularly relevant, and graduation usually entitles to voluntary professional membership of the appropriate association.

2.4 The point which I wish to emphasise is that in each case, professional education for librarianship strove to conform to the existing educational system in order to establish acceptable status. This has meant a moving towards tertiary education, with varying amount of professional association involvement. Although opportunities have been grasped, in no case has library education ever led educational thought and practice. Established national patterns have been followed.

3. Unilateral Internationalism

3.1 Other national systems have been developed, but I should now like to look at librarianship as an international phenomenon. As an Englishman I can hardly fail to think first about the influence of colonialism in spreading libraries throughout the world, and the former importance of the examinations of the Library Association of the U.K. For many years it was possible for people in the old British Empire to qualify as librarians, perhaps by using the correspondence courses of the Library Assistants' Association (as I did, myself). The L.A. Centenary Conference in London in October will show the brotherhood and sisterhood of librarianship existing in the

Anglophone countries. A similar community exists between the Francophone countries.

3.2 As colonialism slowly gave way to political nationalism following World War II, several successive waves of professional internationalism developed. Initially, this was by the medium of unilateral aid, and aid meant the provision of material resources and expertise. Several such bodies still exist, such as the examples given by the Goethe Institutes of Germany, the British Council, and USIS. Unilateral aid has tended to be from the "developed" countries to the "developing", but by no means exclusively. Advisers under these national schemes have tended to be senior librarians.

3.3 Other unilateral schemes exist which provide qualified but less experienced staff, the theory being that young people have a lot to offer internationalism other than merely their professional knowledge. Once again these were initially from the "developed" countries (e.g. USAID, DAD and VSO from America, Germany and Britain respectively), but voluntary workers are now to be found from very many countries. Although often unrecognised by future employers in their home countries, such library work has a reciprocal value in that enthusiastic young librarians are faced with basic problems which call for tackling them from first principles uncluttered by tradition. Their experience in developing countries has proved to be of considerable value to their subsequent careers in their home countries, and this contribution by developing to the "developed" countries is too often ignored.

3.4 Another aspect of unilateral internationalism has been study in the "developed" countries by librarians from overseas. In most cases this has meant sponsored or private participation in the courses organized for the education of student-librarians of the host country. Rarely have special courses or subjects been offered for overseas students. Formerly, one advantage of such study was academic as well as professional respectability; an award from an established academic institution or professional institution gave a readily acknowledged status throughout the world.

4. <u>The New Nationalism</u>

4.1 The passing of the colonial period brought with it an increasing reaction against unilateral internationalism, and each country wished to develop its library services in the way considered best for its own perceived needs. Nevertheless, models from the "developed" countries continued to be adopted and adapted, and genuinely indigenous education and library services have not been well developed. The question is, of course, whether a

truly indigenous library service is now possible in today's shrinking world.

4.2 Nor has the new nationalism abolished unilateral internationalism. It is true that many Anglophone countries have not adopted entirely the British system of education for librarianship, and there are African countries for example which have opted for a fully graduate profession whereas British librarians are still divided on this matter. With the creation of Colleges of Advanced Education in Australia, similar to the Polytechnics in Britain, the introduction of three-year integrated Bachelor's degrees and one-year graduate diplomas (both at first-professional level) on the British model within the last ten years is seen by many as questionable. However, professional education has had to utilise the facilities provided by the federal government. The main differences between Australia and Britain is that the former's colleges first offered three-year undergraduate diplomas (now almost all upgraded to degrees for reasons of status), and that the Library Association of Australia is attempting to create a "closed-shop" by negotiating with employers to restrict job-opportunities to graduates of "recognised" courses (i.e. recognised for its own professional membership).

4.3 Other countries have adopted the American model of a graduate profession at master's degree level, and it follows that (as in Iran) American librarians have been recruited on a unilateral basis to do this. Apart from Turkey, there appears to have been little attempt to introduce the central European model of a five-year first degree of integrated academic, social and professional study. The past twenty years have, however, seen a very significant reduction in the number of librarians from North America and Europe being employed in libraries in South America, Africa and Asia. One important reason for this is the number of library schools which have been (and still are being) established in the latter continents.

4.4 Unilateral nationalism in the days of the new nationalism is often expressed by the provision of librarians for short consultancies rather than for long periods of active employment in developing countries. The British Council, for example, has developed quite an extensive system of consultancies and visiting speakers during the present decade. This leaves librarians in developing countries to select ideas and apply them as they see fit, rather than adopt methods wholesale.

4.5 At the same time there is still a tendency for advanced professional education to take place in "developed" countries leaving first-professional level study for the library schools in developing countries. However, not all countries in the world yet have their own library schools, so that limited reliance on overseas facilities is still a factor for some nations.

5. Multilateral Internationalism

5.1 A most important feature of the post-war world has been the growth of multinational organizations, and these appear to offer hope for reciprocal internationalism which will satisfy national aspirations. The best known is of course the U.N. and its agencies; in our own field UNESCO and UNICEF are the main bodies putting UNDP projects into effect. At first, the U.N. agencies appear to have perpetuated the colonial aspects of librarianship, though it seems difficult to see how it can have been otherwise during its first ten years or so. It is impossible even to attempt to list the achievement of UNESCO with any degree of completeness in this short space; books, long-term specialists, short-term consultancies, educational expertise, conferences, scholarships, periodicals, A-V materials - and much more.

5.2 The aim of UNESCO assistance was that it should be mutual rather than paternalistic, and to some extent this has been achieved. Where it has not, it may be that some blame lies at the door of ourselves as librarians and not only of our respective governments. Whereas the first UNESCO specialists in librarianship were from the "developed" countries, colleagues from "developing" countries are also recruited. However, these latter usually work in other developing countries, so that invaluable ideas and experience just do not reach the "developed" countries of the world by this means. This deficiency in utilising the world's resources is due to the attitude of "giving aid to poorer countries", instead of viewing librarianship as in international profession where each one has something to contribute to the sum total of humanity's welfare.

5.3 One interesting development by UNESCO has been the encouragement of international librarianship by means of international education for librarianship such as the East African Library School at Makerere University. Even this experiment suffered from the restrictions of tradition (the Anglophone catchment area) and paternalism (librarians from "developed" countries are

not expected to study there). It may be that the former will be a serious barrier until we either have a single international language, or librarians are much more polylingual than we are at present. The latter, however, can be overcome to some extent, as is shown by the UNESCO-sponsored M.A. course in Education and Librarianship at Loughborough University for library school lecturers, which is attended by both British and overseas librarians equally.

5.4 There are related binational efforts on a limited scale, such as the joint Pittsburgh University and College of Librarianship Wales International Summer School, which carry credits towards professional courses. Is it possible that this model could be extended, and utilised by professional education systems in other countries?

5.5 Finally, I must mention two multinational bodies which I see as having a much greater potential than they exercise at present. The first of these is COMLA, the Commonwealth Library Association based on the Anglophone countries of the former British empire. With its headquarters in Jamaica, this young organization is already concerned with the placement of librarians for experience in other countries, and with the regionalisation of its members to facilitate international co-operation. It is too early yet to evaluate these activities, but COMLA would seem to be a useful body to encourage international resource-sharing. It has not yet, however, been much concerned with professional education.

5.6 The second multinational body is IFLA itself, for which I predict a much more active and important role than hitherto. The recent reorganization of the interest groups within IFLA ought to give an opportunity for some interesting co-operative schemes in the coming years, and the world-wide economic recession means that co-operative resource sharing is the only way in which we are going to survive. Because IFLA membership is not limited to national library associations which may have their own vested interests in maintaining a power structure, it is already potentially the most important planning body for international co-operation.

5.7 In conjunction with the financial resources of UNESCO, it would appear that the time is right for IFLA to mount a concerted attack on the problem of unequal distribution of scarce resources.

6. The Problems, and Some Solutions

6.1 If librarianship is to survive as a profession it must be truly international, though with local modifications. For this we need to develop an international system of professional education, rather than many national ones. This is because mobility of librarians is (and ought to be) increasing, calling not only for internationally-recognised qualifications but also for education which is internationally useful. Furthermore, the media and materials used by librarians are world-wide in origin, and although the utilisation may be local for the benefit of individual societies and communities, our profession has a responsibility to humanity as a whole.

6.2 We have to look closely at the purposes of education for librarianship; if (as I believe) we must be generalists before becoming specialists, and internationalists before nationalists in our profession, then our education and training must be geared to these ends. One way in which my own and other library schools have attempted to do this is by recruiting an international team of staff, just as UNESCO will do for a particular UNDP project. By international I mean not only having been born in different countries, but by each lecturer having worked in several other countries. This helps us to look at the problems of Australian librarianship through the solutions of many countries, and in this we find that the experience of "developing" countries to be at least as useful as the experience of the "developed" countries.

6.3 How can we reconcile the need to educate all librarians as generalists in a professional core of topics, with each librarian's special needs? How can we ensure that scarce learning resources are fully utilised not only within countries but throughout the world? As suggested above, these resources are not only material but human, not only tangible but philosophical.

6.4 I would mention another feature of my own library school, which is shared by a number of others throughout the world. This is that one mode of learning is by means of external study. Now, it is not so very long since correspondence courses were abandoned in Britain in favour of full-time educational facilities, because of the restrictions in learning modes. However, advances in educational techniques and technology during the past fifteen years have created an entirely new opportunity. The present aim of external study (long-distance, or teletuition, as it is also known) programmes are to create learning laboratory situations in students' homes or local libraries. Similar facilities are

available in educational institutions for persons attending full-time or part-time. By multiplying these learning resources and transporting them (usually by mail) to students' homes, they may be full-time or part-time students without daily travel to Colleges.

6.5 The principle of external study is that materials rather than people are moved. This suggests that an extension of this principle means that materials may be moved to other colleges, and in fact my own library school is already doing this to a limited extent. We hope that this is leading to a situation in which students may study at home full-time or part-time, or may study in one convenient library school but use the resources of several library schools. It is this facility which I believe could be developed by a joint IFLA/UNESCO project. What we have begun to do in Australia may be organised internationally, in order to share the resources and expertise of library schools in all countries.

6.6 I therefore propose that existing experience in resource-sharing and co-operation be examined, and a pilot project of reciprocal international extension of human and material resources between certain library schools be launched.

7. Summary

7.1 None of the following components is novel, but their combination into an integrated attack on the problem of restricted access to resources will be of great benefit to our professional education:

(a) an international staff;

(b) an international view of librarianship;

(c) transfer of materials between library schools in different countries (including purpose-made kits);

(d) students to take external courses at other library schools, according to the schedule approved by their own library school;

(e) exchange of staffs either singly or in small groups, to facilitate exchange and utilisation of materials;

(f) co-operation whereby (for example) private students taking a teletuition course at one college may attend residential school at his local library school;

(g) a system of credits whereby (provided certain core subjects have been taken) students may take electives from one or more library schools by any convenient mode;

(h) an international student placement scheme for practical experience during or following a professional course of study;

(i) national government validation of subjects offered in tertiary educational institutions, for international acceptance under this scheme;

(j) IFLA/UNESCO sponsorship of a pilot-scheme initially, with the object of widening the scheme to all countries.

7.2 My own library school would be happy to place its expertise at the disposal of such an IFLA/UNESCO scheme, and develop its services to further the international aims of such a scheme.

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